

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04

NSAE-00 RSC-01 SIL-01 DOTE-00 H-02 PA-02 PRS-01

USIA-15 SP-02 /055 W

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R 041500Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3454

INFO AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY OSLO

UNCLAS STOCKHOLM 5409

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, SW

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON SWEDISH LABOR MINISTER BENGTSSON

REF: STOCKHOLM 3850

1. DURING MY COURTESY CALL ON  
MINISTER OF LABOR INGEMUND BENGTSSON DECEMBER 2, WE TALKED  
ABOUT EMPLOYMENT IN SWEDEN AND MINISTER'S VISIT TO UNITED  
STATES IN NOVEMBER.

2. WHILE NOT PRESENTLY WORRIED ABOUT EMPLOYMENT SITUATION  
IN SWEDISH AUTOMOBILE INDUSTRY, BENGTSSON SAID HE WAS  
WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY. (NEW CAR REGISTRATIONS FELL  
TO 17,810 IN OCTOBER COMPARED TO 37,869 A YEAR AGO.) AT  
PRESENT TIME, HE SAID, THERE ARE ONLY 75,000 UNEMPLOYED  
PERSONS IN SWEDEN, EQUIVALENT TO 1.6 PERCENT OF LABOR FORCE.  
AUTO INDUSTRY IS NOT LAYING OFF WORKERS AT THE MOMENT, BUT,  
HE OBSERVED, IT IS NOT HIRING NEW ONES EITHER. YOUNG  
PEOPLE ENTERING THE LABOR MARKET FOR THE FIRST TIME WILL HAVE  
DIFFICULTY FINDING JOBS IN THAT INDUSTRY. HE NOTED THAT LAYOFF  
OF A SINGLE AUTO WORKER THREATENS JOBS OF FIVE PEOPLE OUTSIDE  
THE INDUSTRY. BENGTSSON SAID HE WOULD BE WORRIED IF UNEMPLOYMENT  
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REACHED 2.6 PERCENT OF LABOR FORCE; HE JOKED THAT HE WOULD LOSE

HIS OWN JOB IF IT REACHED 3.6 PERCENT. SAAB-SCANIA HE SAID WAS NOT LIKELY TO LET WORKERS GO, BUT HE WAS CONCERNED ABOUT VOLVO, WHICH MIGHT HAVE TO DO SO IF THE MARKET FOR NEW CARS CONTINUED TO DECLINE. (SAAB-SCANIA IS NOT SO DEPENDENT ON PASSENGER CAR SALES AS VOLVO, BUT HAS MORE DIVERSIFIED PRODUCTION.)

3. MINISTER SAID HE ENJOYED HIS RECENT VISIT TO

WASHINGTON. HE COMMENTED ON STIMULATING CONVERSATIONS HE HAD WITH SECRETARY OF LABOR BRENNAN, ESPECIALLY ABOUT GROUPS OF WORKERS MOST VULNERABLE TO LAYOFF. HE NOTED THAT SENATOR NELSON HAD BEEN MUCH INTERESTED IN SWEDISH LABOR POLICY AND THE SWEDISH LABOR MARKET IN CONNECTION WITH HIS WORK ON SENATE LABOR AND PUBLIC WELFARE COMMITTEE. VISIT WITH GEORGE MEANY, HE SAID, WAS A LITTLE LIKE CALLING ON THE POPE; VISIT WENT OFF WELL EVEN THOUGH THERE IS SOME DIFFERENCE OF OPINION BETWEEN SWEDISH LABOR AND AFL-CIO.

4. ACTION REQUESTED: I WOULD FIND IT USEFUL TO RECEIVE FROM LABOR DEPARTMENT SOME GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF U.S. SYSTEM FOR COLLECTING UNEMPLOYMENT DATA. MINISTER WAS MUCH INTERESTED IN U.S. METHODOLOGY AND I WOULD LIKE TO PASS MATERIAL TO HIM.  
STRAUSZ-HUPE

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** ECONOMIC CONDITIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, VISITS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 04 DEC 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** n/a  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** n/a  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:**  
**Disposition Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1974STOCKH05409  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D740352-0252  
**From:** STOCKHOLM  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
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**Legacy Key:** link1974/newtext/t19741260/aaaabzaw.tel  
**Line Count:** 83  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION EUR  
**Original Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 2  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** STOCKHOLM 3850  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** izenbei0  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 02 OCT 2002  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <02 OCT 2002 by ReddocGW>; APPROVED <13 FEB 2003 by izenbei0>  
**Review Markings:**

Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
30 JUN 2005

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON SWEDISH LABOR MINISTER BENGTSSON  
**TAGS:** ELAB, SW  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005